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FARMER'S BOY AND PRESIDENT.

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN:

FARMER'S BOY AND PRESIDENT.

"THE Martyr President," as Abraham Lincoln is designated in the United States, furnishes one of the most astonishing examples of native genius to be met with in history. What Shakespeare is in literature Lincoln is in the sphere of action. Both were men of original power, and both rose out of obscurity, though the statesman received the world's recognition earlier than the poet.

Lincoln, the sixteenth President of the United States, was the son of pioneers, and his early experience was that of a farmer's boy living in Kentucky, which was then on the border land of civilised countries. His father, a rough, good-natured man, could neither read nor write, but his mother appears to have been a woman of a higher type. Dr. J. G. Holland says of her that "she was a slender, pale, sad,

and sensitive woman, with much in her nature that was truly heroic, and much that shrank from the rude life around her. Her understanding was considered something wonderful by her family, and she was a brave, sensible, and devout Christian woman." It is curious that the exact birth-place of her famous son is not known. When he was chosen for the Presidency, he was approached on the subject of his birth-place, as the people naturally desired to have a picture of the little log cabin. Lincoln took a book and pencil, and for a moment a melancholy shadow settled on his rugged features, while his eyes had an inexpressible sadness in them, and a far-away look, as if they were searching for something seen long, long years ago. Then he wrote: "I was born February 12th, 1809, in then Hardin County, Kentucky, at a point

within the now recently-formed County of Larin, a mile or a mile-and-a-half from where Hodginsville now is. My parents being dead, and my own memory not serving, I know no means of identifying the precise locality. It was in Nolin Creek." The family afterwards moved to a fertile and picturesque spot on Knob Creek. Here all the books that the Lincoln shanty could boast were the Bible, the Catechism, and a copy of Dillworth's spelling book. These Abraham made good use of, so that in later life there were few men who had a greater command of the Scriptures than he; and his speeches had much of the Anglo-Saxon simplicity, terseness, and vigour so nobly characteristic of the English Bible.

Education in the wilds of Kentucky was not of a brilliant character. It would have astonished even the poor of the mother country before they enjoyed the privileges of the present school system. It frequently began with a little reading, and ended there; "figures" or arithmetic, being an unknown quantity. Young Lincoln received but the

merest outline of an education. He was more precocious than most children of his age, however, and his friends did all that was possible to take advantage of this fact. He made quick progress in reading, but acquired the art of penmanship under great difficulties. As books were very scarce, he thoroughly digested the few he could obtain; and notably among these were *Æsop's Fables* and the *Pilgrim's Progress*, to which were afterwards added a *Life of Washington* and *Robinson Crusoe*. The second and fourth became great favourites with him. In 1816 the Lincolns sold their old home and moved into Indiana, where Abraham began in earnest the life of a pioneer boy, becoming very skilful in the use of the axe. He and his father erected a wood cabin, sixteen feet by eight. The boy "practised penmanship with a charred stick on the bark of trees and on slabs. In the winter he wrote his name in the snow with a stick; and in the summer he wrote it on the ground in the garden." It seems incredible now, that the Chief Magistrate of a mighty Republic could have risen from such surroundings. It

took nine years for anything like a village to spring up in the neighbourhood.

The first great sorrow came to young Lincoln in the autumn of 1818, when his mother died from a fearful visitation called "the milk disease," which had already carried off two friends and relatives named Sparrow. This was an irreparable loss; for Mrs. Lincoln had instructed her son in the paths of virtue, and had taught him to be a total abstainer before the Temperance movement had been heard of. Thomas Lincoln constructed with his own hands a rough coffin for his wife, and, with a few friends standing round, she was laid to rest under a grassy knoll. Abraham was now thrown more into the companionship of his cousin, Dennis Hanks, a youth about his own age. Mr. Lincoln desired a funeral sermon to be preached over his wife, so he got his son to indite a letter to an old friend, one Parson Elkins, an earnest and God-fearing man. It was a memorable event, the writing of this letter, and Mr. Thayer, in his *Life* of the President, states that never before had there been

a member of the family who could perform such a feat. The following conversation ensued between father and son:—

"See how much it is worth to be able to write," said Lincoln, as Abraham finished reading the letter. "It's worth ten times as much as it cost to be able to write only that one letter."

"It ain't much work to learn to write," said Abraham; "I'd work as hard again for it before I'd give it up."

"You'd have to give it up if you was knocked about as I was when a boy."

"I know that."

"You don't know it as I do; and I hope you never will. But it's worth more than the best farm to know how to write a letter as well as that."

"I shall write one better than that yet," said Abraham. "But how long will it take for the letter to go to Parson Elkins?"

"That's more than I can tell; but it will go there some time, and I hope it will bring him here."

"He won't want to come so far as this," suggested Abraham.

"It ain't so far for him as it was for us."

"Why ain't it?"

"Because he lives nearer the line of Indiana than we did. It ain't more than seventy-five miles for him to come, and he often rides as far as that."

Seventy-five miles! Yet the good minister came at last, about three months after the despatch of the letter. The people for a considerable distance round were apprised of the intended service, and on a certain Sunday old and young travelled to the spot in carts, on horseback, or on foot. Parson Elkins preached an admirable sermon, and one which not only brought vividly to Abraham Lincoln's memory his mother's care, tenderness, and affection, but one that strengthened all his good resolutions.

In December, 1819, Mr. Lincoln married again, and Abraham, as well as others, found the advantage of this second mother, who brightened the household, and superintended its arrangements with much skill. Her own children brought also their companionship, as well as an appreciable store of household

goods. Mrs. Lincoln knew the value of education, and it was now placed within the reach of Abraham at the pioneer schools, where he became very enthusiastic over his studies. One of his masters, Andrew Crawford, distinguished in his pupil the foreshadowings of a great man. The youth was singularly truthful, and anecdotes are related of his great honesty, candour, and readiness to confess his faults. Cruelty to animals incensed him greatly, and one of his earliest compositions was upon this theme. He was wont to recite for the instruction or amusement of his companions, and to display his oratorical powers from the stump of a tree. He further came to be called "the peacemaker," for he could not endure to witness broils among his companions. A strange figure was this incipient ruler at fifteen years of age. He was then almost six feet in height, homely and ungainly in appearance, with legs and arms lengthy out of all proportion to his body. Very swarthy in complexion, and comical in aspect, he might have sat as a character

for Dickens. He wore a linsey-wolsey shirt, buckskin breeches, and low shoes; but between the bottom of the breeches and the top of the shoes there was a great gap. He was only at school for a year, but he beat all his masters, Simple Proportion marking the limit of their education. It is said that Abraham wielded a facile pen in his schooldays, and he celebrated the somewhat formidable nasal feature of his tutor Crawford, in "verse" and "prose," whose fame spread "as wide as to the Wabash and the Ohio." On more than one occasion when Lincoln, in his boisterous fits of humour, was asked what he thought would become of him, he replied that he would yet be "President of the United States," which prophecy was, of course, taken as a mere bit of boastful pleasantry.

At the age of nineteen Abraham went to work for a Mr. Gentry, the proprietor of Gentryville, and he made a voyage as a hand on a Mississippi flat-boat. The business was dangerous and exciting, and he had a brush with some marauding slaves. By

this time Lincoln's intellectual powers had made their mark in his district, and political and other compositions of his had been published, which were regarded as unusually clever and promising. Believing, also, in a healthy body as well as a sound mind, Lincoln devoted some of his hours of recreation to popular sports, and soon excelled all his companions in wrestling. At this period he borrowed from a friend the *Statutes of Indiana*, which he read and carefully digested, thus laying a basis for his subsequent legal studies; and he practised himself in speaking in public. One of his companions states that he was always calm, logical, and clear. He read and wrote a good deal, and found great delight in attending the law courts when he could get an opportunity.

To escape the dreaded milk disease, the Lincolns moved into Illinois in 1830. Abraham was now just twenty-one years of age. He assisted his father in clearing a farm, and split rails for the fence; hence he was afterwards known as the "Rail-splitter." During the next year or two he

went through a great variety of experiences—now piloting boats under dangerous circumstances, and now serving in a pioneer store. While residing in New Salem, he won the title, “Honest Abe,” which he carried through life. “The public confidence in his integrity and fair-mindedness was such that he was usually chosen one of the umpires in all games and trials where two sides enlisted.” He finally became in such great demand in this line that both parties constituted him judge. The pursuit of knowledge was his chief ambition, however, and he liked to know what was going forward in the world. For years he subscribed to the *Louisville Journal* when he had not money enough to dress respectably. In 1832 the Indian Chief, Black Hawk, caused a great deal of trouble, and Lincoln, believing him to be one of the most treacherous enemies of the whites, enlisted in one of the volunteer regiments sent out against that celebrated chief by the Governor of Illinois. Abraham was chosen chief of his company, and, as its term of service expired before the conclusion of the war, he re-

enlisted in another company as private. He did this for a third time, being resolved to serve his country so long as the war lasted, and ultimately the Battle of Bad Axe put an end to the conflict. While acting as captain, he endangered his own life by fearlessly protecting an Indian who had arrived in the camp with a safe-conduct from General Cass. It was not Lincoln’s lot to come face to face with the enemy, which must have been rather trying, as he revelled in danger. By a curious coincidence, there were two officers in the Black Hawk War destined to become Presidents of the United States—Colonel Zachary Taylor and Captain Abraham Lincoln. Years after he served in the Black Hawk War, Lincoln narrated his first experience in drilling his company. He was marching with his detachment across a field, when he desired to pass through a gateway into the next enclosure. “I could not, for the life of me,” said he, “remember the proper word of command for getting my company endwise, so that it could pass through the gate; so, as we came near the gate, I shouted,

‘This company is dismissed for two minutes, when it will fall in again on the other side of the gate!’” Utilising this amusing incident with regard to the discussions in Congress, he remarked, “I sometimes think that gentlemen who get into a tight place in debate would like to dismiss the House until the next day, and then take a fair start.”

In 1832 Lincoln was “run” by his friends for the State legislature. His first political speech, which was very brief, was as follows:—“Gentlemen and fellow citizens, I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by many friends to become a candidate for the Legislature. My politics are short and sweet: I am in favour of a national bank; I am in favour of the internal improvement system and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected, I shall be thankful; if not, it will be all the same.” He was not elected, but in his own district of New Salem he polled 277 votes out of a possible 284. Lincoln now entered into business as a

merchant, where he lost heavily through a worthless partner. While waiting for a new opening, he devoured everything that he could lay his hands upon in the shape of books. Burns and Shakespeare he read with great gusto, committing large portions of their works to memory, and they were ever afterwards his favourite poets. Under the auspices of Calhoun of Springfield he began practical work as a surveyor, studying law privately at the same time. In 1833 President Jackson appointed him postmaster of New Salem, not a very onerous occupation. The letters were few and far between, and it was laughingly said of him that he “carried the office in his hat,” because when going out he would sometimes put the missives in his hat for the purpose of delivering them to the parties addressed if he should happen to meet them.

The first step in Lincoln’s public career was taken in 1834, when he was elected to the State Legislature on the Whig ticket. His success was all the more creditable because he absolutely declined to resort to

the dishonourable means for obtaining votes employed by some candidates, such as providing grog shops. His appearance was so uncouth that an elector, Dr. Barrett, exclaimed, when he saw him, "Well, if that fellow is qualified to go to the Legislature, his looks belie him, that is all." When he had heard Lincoln speak, however, the doctor said, "I give it up now. Why, sir, he is a perfect take in,—he knows more than all of them put together." Lincoln was re-elected to the Legislature in 1836, in 1838, and in 1840. During his second term the question of slavery was violently agitated in Illinois. The Democratic party introduced a series of resolutions against the Abolitionists and in favour of slavery, and so great was the pressure put upon the Whigs, that nearly all the members were coerced into supporting these arbitrary measures. Not so Lincoln, however. He denounced the resolutions and their supporters, and manfully, and almost alone, fought the battle of freedom for two years.

Having been incited to the systematic study of the law by

Mr. John T. Stuart, Lincoln was admitted to the Bar in 1837, and became Mr. Stuart's partner. He practised at Springfield, and had much success in Jury trials. The manner in which he had already succeeded in gaining the public esteem is evidenced by the fact that at a dinner given to the Representatives of Sangamon County, he was toasted as "Abraham Lincoln, one of Nature's noblemen." The partnership with Mr. Stuart ended in 1840, and not long afterwards Lincoln joined Judge S. T. Logan. In 1842 he married Miss Mary Todd, daughter of the Hon. R. S. Todd, of Lexington, Kentucky. By this union he had four children, all sons. Three of them died before the age of manhood, but the eldest, Robert, lived to become Secretary of War at Washington, and he is now United States Minister to Great Britain.

Characteristic anecdotes are related of Lincoln's legal experiences. On one occasion the ensuing conversation occurred after a client had laid his case before the advocate.

"I cannot serve you," said

Lincoln, "for you are wrong and the other party is right."

"That is none of your business, if I hire and pay you for taking the case," retorted the man.

"Not my business!" exclaimed Lincoln. "My business is never to defend wrong. If I am a lawyer, I never take a case that is manifestly wrong."

"Well, you can make trouble for the woman," added the applicant.

"Yes," responded Lincoln, "there is no reasonable doubt but that I can gain the case for you. I can set a whole neighbourhood at loggerheads; I can distress a widowed mother and her six fatherless children, and thereby get for you six hundred dollars, which rightfully belongs as much to the woman and her children as it does to you. But I won't do it."

"Not for any amount of pay?" inquired the man. "Not for all you are worth," replied Lincoln. "You must remember that some things which are legally right are not morally right. I shall not take your case."

Lincoln took up matters which were considered unpopular, that

is, cases in which negroes had been seized again after a period of freedom, and by dint of tireless energy and exertion he secured their restitution. He could do nothing with causes where he had not the strongest belief in the innocence of his clients, and whenever his fellow counsel were successful in such causes, he declined to receive one cent of the fees. The son of an old benefactress of Lincoln having been charged with murder, the distracted mother made a touching and impassioned appeal to "the noble, good Abe" to save her boy, whom he had rocked when a babe in his cradle. Lincoln did his best, but the evidence of the principal witness was of an apparently crushing nature. He swore positively that the murder was committed at half-past ten o'clock on a certain night, and that the moon was shining brightly at the time. The case seemed hopeless, and yet Lincoln felt that there was a plot against an innocent man. He reviewed the evidence; then, raising his clear, full voice to a higher key, and lifting his long, wiry arm above his head, as if about to annihilate his client's

accuser, he exclaimed: "The witness testifies that the moon was shining brightly when the deed was perpetrated, between the hours of ten and eleven o'clock, when the moon did not appear on that night, as your Honour's almanac will show, until an hour or more later, and, consequently, the whole story is a fabrication." This concise forensic point was followed by a fervent and eloquent appeal, which closed with the words, "If justice is done, as I believe it will be, before the sun sets it will shine upon my client a free man." There was a revulsion of feeling throughout the whole court, and the accused was acquitted and actually a free man before sundown. The widowed mother and the advocate mingled their tears over the youth thus snatched from the gallows. Judge Davis said of Lincoln as a lawyer—"In all the elements that constitute the great lawyer, he had few equals. The framework of his mental and moral being was honesty. He never took from a client, even when the cause was gained, more than he thought the service was worth, and the client

could reasonably afford to pay. He was loved by his brethren of the bar." Judge Drummond also bore this testimony: "With a probity of character known to all, with an intuitive insight into the human heart, with a clearness of statement which was in itself an argument, with uncommon power and felicity of illustration—often, it is true, of a plain and homely kind—and with that sincerity and earnestness of manner which carried conviction, he was one of the most successful lawyers in the State."

Lincoln was elected to Congress in 1846, his majority being 1,511, as compared with a majority of only 914 which Henry Clay had been able to secure in the same State two years before. Many who were not Whigs voted for Lincoln, on the ground of his sterling personal qualities. He took his seat in the National House of Representatives on December 6th, 1847, and, being the only Whig member from Illinois, his appearance created considerable interest. Lincoln opposed the war with Mexico, which was waged in the interests of slavery, and, during the prolonged anti-slavery conflict

in Congress, he spoke frequently and with great warmth against the cruel and unjust system, which he declared must bring down a terrible retribution upon the country unless it were abolished. He energetically supported the efforts to abolish slavery in the district of Columbia, and introduced a bill for that purpose. Becoming widely known for his endeavours to reduce the limits of slavery, and for his vigorous sympathy with all the aspirations of his political section, he was trusted as a leader of the people in the Kansas-Nebraska agitation, which proposed that these territories should be declared "free soil." Declining re-election to Congress in 1848, and again in 1850, in order to be with his family and to follow his profession, Lincoln turned with renewed ardour to the study of English and American literature. He was a conspicuous example of what can be accomplished after forty, making as great strides from this time forward as he had made in the earlier stages of his career. Six years of comparative retirement from public life enabled him to add largely to his stock of

general knowledge. He rendered at this time good service to the Temperance cause, and in 1854 formally joined the Order of the Sons of Temperance.

In 1854 Lincoln furnished evidence of the great magnanimity of his nature, by insisting that the votes of his Illinois friends, in the election for United States senator, should be transferred to Lyman Trumbull, in order to defeat the slavery candidate, Governor Matheson. This was done—though several Whigs wept over the necessity—and the election was secured. Two years later he spoke with remarkable eloquence at the organisation of the Republican party of Illinois; and at this juncture he was put forward by his State as a candidate for the Vice-Presidency, on the ticket with General Fremont. He received 110 votes, which strikingly showed the position he was already gaining as a statesman. Lincoln took an active part in the Fremont Campaign, delivering many powerful speeches. At one place a Democrat thus challenged him: "Mr. Lincoln, is it true that you entered this State barefooted,

driving a yoke of oxen?" Lincoln replied, "Yes, I think I can prove the fact by at least a dozen men in the crowd, any one of whom is more respectable than my questioner." Then he passed on to a high strain of oratory, and deeply moved his audience by the declaration—"We will speak for freedom and against slavery, so long as the Constitution of our country guarantees free speech, until everywhere on this wide land the sun shall shine, and the rain shall fall, and the wind shall blow upon no man who goes forth to unrequited toil."

Lincoln's determination to do the right was never better exemplified than at the Republican State Convention which met at Springfield, in June, 1857. He saw the struggle that must come between the Union and the Slave States of the South, and in his now famous address, known as "The House-divided-against-itself Speech," he incorporated and delivered the following passage:—"A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this Government cannot endure permanently—half-slave

and half-free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other." His enemies hailed these bold utterances with delight, as being certain to portend Lincoln's ruin, and even his friends were dubious concerning their wisdom. When the latter remonstrated with him, he replied, "If it must be that I go down because of this speech, then let me go down linked to truth—die in the advocacy of what is just and right." After the speech had been delivered, and it had been stigmatised as foolish and suicidal, Dr. Loring asked its utterer whether he did not wish it were wiped out of existence? Lincoln answered, "Well, Doctor, if I had to draw a pen across and erase my whole life from existence, and had one poor gift or choice left as to what I should save from the wreck, I should choose that speech, and leave it to the world unerased." The result proved that he was right, and that he had seen further than his contemporaries. The speech was recognised years

later as one of the wisest he had ever delivered, and it gave the keynote to the policy of maintaining the Union. "It settled the character and issue of the next Presidential election, and finally sealed the doom of slavery" in the United States.

In 1858 the election in Illinois was for a Legislature which should choose a senator, and Lincoln "stumped" the State as the opposing orator to Stephen A. Douglas, the able Democratic candidate. They argued before the same audiences, Lincoln securing the honours in these important debates, a fact which gave him a national reputation. During one of the discussions he closed with these words an eloquent tribute to the Declaration of Independence: "You may do anything with me you choose, if you will but heed these sacred principles. You may not only defeat me for the Senate, but you may take me and put me to death. While pretending no indifference to earthly honours, I do claim to be actuated in this contest by something higher than an anxiety for office. I charge you to drop every paltry and

insignificant thought for any man's success. It is nothing; I am nothing; Judge Douglas is nothing. But do not destroy that immortal emblem of humanity—the Declaration of American Independence." Although in the popular vote Lincoln received a majority of 4,085 over Mr. Douglas, his opponent was returned to the United States Senate, owing to the peculiar apportionment of the legislative districts.

There was a strange scene of excitement and enthusiasm at Decatur on the 9th of May, 1860, when the Republican State Convention of Illinois met in a building erected for the purpose. Amid a tempest of applause, "a distinguished citizen of Illinois, Abraham Lincoln," was requested to take his seat on the stand, but he was actually borne to it by his admirers. When the Convention proceeded to business, it was announced that an old democrat was waiting outside, with the object of presenting something to the Convention. An order being given for his admission, John Hanks, Lincoln's old friend,

fellow rail-splitter, and comrade in the Black Hawk War,—appeared. He bore on his shoulders two rails, surmounted by a banner bearing this inscription, “Two rails from a lot made by Abraham Lincoln and John Hanks, in the Sangamon Bottom, in the year 1830.” The present was greeted with volleys of applause and shouts of “A speech!” “Let’s hear the rail-splitter,” “Old Abe must show his hand!” Lincoln, who was rather discomposed by this flattering tribute, stepped forward and, pointing to the rails, smilingly said, “Gentlemen, I suppose you want to know something about those things. Well, the truth is, John Hanks and I did make rails in the Sangamon Bottom. I don’t know whether we made those particular rails or not; the fact is, I don’t think they are a credit to the makers. But I do know this; I made rails then, and I think I could make better ones than these now.” A tempest of cheers shook the building, and when it had subsided, a resolution was carried unanimously declaring Abraham Lincoln to be the first choice of the Republican party

of Illinois for the Presidency.

A month or so after this meeting the National Republican Convention assembled at Chicago. It was attended by 25,000 citizens, who were accommodated in a huge structure provided for the occasion. There were eight Republican candidates for the Presidency, viz.:—William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, Edward Bates, Judge McLean, William L. Dayton, Simon Cameron, Abraham Lincoln, and Benjamin F. Wade. Mr. Seward had a European as well as an American reputation, but he secured only a very inferior place in the balloting. In the informal ballot, Lincoln had 102 votes, Chase 49, and Bates 48. As it was evident that Seward and some others had no chance of nomination, their supporters gave their votes to Lincoln, who was chosen on the third ballot. The nomination was hailed with wild enthusiasm, and the news was telegraphed to Springfield; Lincoln was at the office of the *Journal* when it arrived, and picking up the telegram he observed, “Well, gentlemen, there is a little woman at our house who is

probably more interested in this despatch than I am; and if you will excuse me, I will take it up and let her see it." When a number of citizens called to congratulate the Presidential candidate, it was expected that, as usual, his health would be drank in the choicest liquors, but they had mistaken the nature of Lincoln. After the official ceremonies were over, a servant brought in a waiter containing a large pitcher of water and several glass tumblers, whereupon Lincoln rose and said, "Gentlemen, we must pledge our mutual healths in the most healthy beverage that God has given to man; it is the only beverage I have ever used or allowed in my family, and I cannot conscientiously depart from it on the present occasion; it is pure Adam's ale, from the spring." With that he raised a tumbler to his lips, and those guests who did not agree with his principles, were constrained to admire his consistency and to follow his example.

The public reasons for Lincoln's nomination as the Republican candidate for the Presidency were his well-known abhorrence

of slavery and his determination to maintain the Union. But his personal claims were very strong, and there was no man in the party so widely respected for his sterling honesty and uprightness, and for the way in which, through sheer force of character, he had risen from the humblest sphere until he had acquired a national reputation.

When the time for the Presidential contest arrived, there were four candidates for the Presidency: Lincoln, Douglas, Breckenridge, and Bell. Lincoln was the candidate of all those citizens, whether in the North or in the South, who already perceived the ultimate drift of the conflict, and were for the Union, against all agitations which threatened to overthrow it. Lincoln was elected President on the 6th of November, by a popular vote numbering 1,857,610, being nearly half-a-million more votes than were cast for the Democratic candidate, Douglas. The popular vote for Breckenridge, the Slavery candidate, was 847,900; and of these 348,012 were cast in Northern States. There were thus about half-a-

million voters, but no more, who favoured the extreme theories of the Southern democracy. The votes cast for Lincoln in the Electoral College numbered 180, as against 72 cast for Breckenridge, 41 for Bell, and 10 for Douglas. He had thus 57 more votes than all the other candidates combined. Lincoln felt the importance and solemnity of his election very deeply; for he was a man of profound religious faith, and moved by a consuming desire to befriend the slave and to preserve the Union. "I know there is a God," he exclaimed, shortly before the result of the contest was made known, "and that He hates injustice and slavery. I see the storm coming, and I know that His hand is in it. If He has a place and work for me, I am ready; I am nothing, but truth is everything. I know I am right, because I know that liberty is right. I have told them that a house divided against itself cannot stand, and Christ and reason say the same; and they will find it so. Douglas don't care whether slavery is voted up or voted down; but God cares, and humanity

cares, and I care; and with God's help I shall not fail. I may not see the end, but it will come and I shall be vindicated."

Between the date of the Presidential election in Nov. 1860 and the formal inauguration of Lincoln, in March 1861, there was time for the President's enemies in the South to reflect, and they employed the intervening period in preparing for armed revolt. The South was greatly assisted in this work by the fact that depôts of arms and of war material had been so located by the Southern officials in the War Department, as to put them within easy reach in case of insurrection; while the small army of the United States was scattered in detachments in remote parts of the country. By this manœuvre the South had five months' start of the North in the active preparations for war.

Before leaving Springfield for his installation at Washington, Lincoln spent some time with his mother at Charleston. Mr. Lamon, one of the President's biographers, states that their last interview was most affecting.

"She embraced him with deep emotion, and said she was sure she should never behold him again, for she felt that his enemies would assassinate him. 'No, no, mother, they will not do that. Trust in the Lord and all will be well; we shall see each other again.' But, inexpressibly affected by this new evidence of her tender attachment and deep concern for his safety, he gradually and reluctantly withdrew from her arms, feeling more deeply oppressed by the heavy cares which time and events were rapidly augmenting." There were many other prognostications besides Mrs. Lincoln's, that the President would come to an untimely end; and from the first he seems to have carried his life in his hand.

However, Lincoln's courage was as conspicuous as his energy and determination; and on the 11th of February, 1861, he left Springfield for Washington with his family. To the friends who gathered to wish him "God speed" he spoke these beautiful parting words: "No one not in my position can appreciate the sadness I feel at this parting. To

this people I owe all that I am. Here I have lived more than a quarter-of-a-century. Here my children were born, and here one of them lies buried. I know not how soon I shall see you again. A duty devolves on me which is greater, perhaps, than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington. He never would have succeeded but for the aid of Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. I feel that I cannot succeed without the same Divine aid which sustained him, and on the same Almighty Being I place my reliance for support; and I hope you, my friends, will pray that I may receive that Divine assistance, without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain. Again I bid you all an affectionate farewell."

The journey to Washington was a magnificent ovation all through, but from the minority, threats of assassination were heard; and when Lincoln reached Philadelphia he was met by the startling intelligence that a plot had been discovered to kill him in passing through Baltimore on the ensuing day. The President-

elect was disinclined to notice these reports, but it was arranged that instead of going on by the train originally fixed, the Presidential party should go through the same night to Washington by the night express. They arrived safely in the capital at half-past six the next morning. As the telegraphic wires had been cut, the time of the President's arrival was left in doubt. Mr. Elihu B. Washburne was at the station, however, when the train arrived, and has thus described the incident: "When the train came to a stand I watched with fear and trembling to see the passengers descend. I saw every car emptied, and there was no Mr. Lincoln. I was well-nigh in despair, and when about to leave I saw slowly emerge from the last sleeping-car three persons. I could not mistake the long, lank form of Mr. Lincoln, and my heart bounded with joy and gratitude. He had on a soft, low-crowned hat, a muffler round his neck, and a short bob-tailed overcoat. Any one who knew him at that time could not have failed to recognize him at once, but, I must confess, he looked

more like a well-to-do farmer from one of the back towns of Jo. Davies' County coming to Washington to see the city, take out his land warrant, and get the patent for his farm, than the President of the United States." Republican simplicity indeed on the part of one whose life was invaluable, and upon whose words a whole continent hung breathless!

The inauguration of Lincoln took place on the 4th of March, 1861, and a vast concourse of people assembled at Washington to witness the ceremony. In closing his memorable address on that now historical occasion, the President uttered this pathetic appeal to the enemies of the Government: "In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of Civil War. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the Government; while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect, and defend it. I am loath to close. We are not

enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may be strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature." There was a strain of true poetry, as well as eloquence, in this appeal; but before its aspirations were realized, the country was destined to pass through a terrible baptism of blood.

The South found no elements of weakness in the President's address. He met the projected rupture of the Union with the declaration that it was perpetual. "Perpetuity," he said, "is implied in the fundamental law of all governments. It is safe to assert that no Government ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination." This firm but necessary attitude Lincoln held in public, while in private he commended himself, his country, and his family to

the care and protection of Almighty God. He was supported by an able Cabinet, but his unswerving trust was placed in the great body of the people. Eleven of the discontented States seceded, and authorised Commissioners to treat with the Government of the United States for the establishment of new relations. Lincoln refused to receive or recognise the Commissioners, holding the Union to be one and indivisible. Upon this issue, civil war ensued. Fort Sumter was reduced on April 12th, 1861, and three days later the President, by Proclamation, called for 75,000 men of the militia of the States. Congress was convened in extra Session for the 4th of July. A sum of 40,000,000 dols. was at once voted, authority was given to raise an army of 500,000 volunteers, and all previous calls for armed force made by the President were ratified. The Battle of Bull Run, in July, nerved the North to yet more determined efforts. Endeavours were made to commit the Government to a declaration of the independence of the slaves; but

at this juncture such a step was firmly resisted, as tending to confuse the issue. The Constitutional position assumed by Lincoln and his Cabinet was that the War was undertaken for the defence of the Union, and this position the President would not suffer to be obscured.

Now began a time of supreme difficulty for Lincoln, but it was one which brought out the real greatness of his nature, and caused a distinguished Frenchman to exclaim that he was superior to Cæsar. The President not only conducted the civil affairs of the nation, but guided its military affairs with a judgment and an ability which extracted even the admiration of his foes. Military operations conceived on a grand scale were set in motion at the beginning of 1862. McClellan's defeats caused for a time depression in the North, but they were more than avenged by the victory over General Lee at Antietam, and General Grant's successes in the West. Foreign complications threatened also to add to the President's troubles. The seizure of the Southern Commissioners, Messrs. Slidell and

Mason, on board the British steamer *Trent*, nearly precipitated a war with England, especially as there was likewise a strong party in this country which sympathised with the Southern Confederacy, and some of our shipowners assisted that cause by fitting out confederate privateers. Lincoln, however, declined the mediation of the Emperor of the French, and took the diplomatic difficulties into his own hands. By timely concessions he averted war with England, and was enabled to concentrate his attention exclusively upon the Civil War. In September, 1862, he proclaimed that slaves in all States which should be in insurrection on January 1st, 1863, would then be declared free.

During this second year of his administration, the President was visited by severe domestic trouble and anxiety, in addition to the public burdens he had to bear. He lost one son from fever, and another was in extreme danger. After the death of his boy he shut himself up in his room, and indulged in excessive grief. No one seemed to be able to console him. At last, Dr. Vinton, of New

York, procured an interview with him, in the course of which he told Lincoln frankly that it was sinful to indulge in such grief. "Your son is *alive* in Paradise," said Dr. Vinton. "Alive! *Alive!*" exclaimed the President, starting to his feet; "Surely you mock me." "No, my dear sir, believe me; Christ himself declares it." Lincoln looked at him a moment, then, throwing his arms about the clergyman's neck, and laying his head upon his shoulders, he sobbed aloud, repeating "Alive! Alive!" From that time the President was comforted by the words of Christ, and no longer mourned under the dread of an eternal separation. At this trying time he was again warned against rebels in Washington, who might assassinate him, when he replied, "I am in God's hand; let Him do with me what seemeth good to Him."

In the year 1863 Lincoln called for 300,000 volunteers, to take the places of those whose term of enlistment would expire. Pardon was proclaimed to all persons in arms against the United States, upon condition of taking the oath of allegiance. The

promised proclamation of emancipation to slaves in all States in insurrection was made, and the refusal to recognise the Government of Maximilian in Mexico was continued. Military force was concentrated in New York city to suppress serious riots which had broken out in consequence of the enforcement of a law for conscription. The times were grave, and the President in the White House was filled with anxiety, and would willingly have exchanged places with the meanest soldier upon the battlefield. On one occasion he remarked, "If it were not for my belief in an over-ruling Providence, it would be difficult for me, in the midst of such complications, to keep my reason on its seat. But I am confident that the Almighty has His plans, and will work them out; and, whether we see it or not, they will be the wisest and best for us. I have always taken counsel of Him, and referred to Him my plans, and have never adopted a course of proceeding without being assured, as far as I could be, of His approbation."

In consecrating the battle-field cemetery near Gettysburg, in

Nov., 1863, the President made this brief but touchingly eloquent speech:—

“Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we *say* here, but it can never forget what they *did* here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so

nobly advanced. It is, rather, for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

The chosen orator of the day was Edward Everett, one of the most accomplished speakers of the age; but after Lincoln concluded, Everett took his hand and said:—“My speech will soon be forgotten; yours never will be. How gladly would I exchange my hundred pages for your twenty lines.”

Lincoln's relations with the army are well worthy of notice. He issued an order for the better observance of Sunday, and deplored and rebuked intemperance and profane swearing. Yet he was a favourite with the soldiers, who alternated the endearing epithet of “Father

Abraham" with the more familiar one of "Old Abe." Many anecdotes are recorded of his respiting deserters. Once he was unable to resist the pleadings of a babe borne in its mother's arms. In another case he overrode the decision of Secretary Stanton, and in many subsequent instances his great tenderness availed to preserve lives which had been forfeited to the State. Once a repentant soldier begged forgiveness for fighting against the North, and he received it immediately. On another occasion, a public man complained of his Amnesty Proclamation, and Lincoln made this truly Christian reply:—"When a man is sincerely penitent for his misdeeds, and gives satisfactory evidence of the same, he can safely be pardoned, and there is no exception to the rule." He grieved for those slain in battle, almost as though they were his own sons. One morning, after a terrible engagement, Secretary Seward found him pacing his room in a painfully distressed condition. In answer to the Secretary's enquiries, he said:—"This dreadful news from the

boys (the soldiers) has banished sleep and appetite. Not a moment's sleep last night, nor a crumb of food this morning."

After another hard-fought battle he buried his face in his hands, exclaiming, "I shall never more be glad!" One of the Northern Army generals assured the President that a number of deserters must be shot for the sake of discipline, but Lincoln replied—"Mr. General, there are already too many weeping widows in the United States. Don't ask me to add to their number, for I won't do it."

To a mother in Boston, who had lost five sons in battle, President Lincoln wrote this touching letter:—

"DEAR MADAM,—I have been shown, in the files of the War Department, a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts, that you are the mother of five sons, who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the conso-

lation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.—Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

“ABRAHAM LINCOLN.”

In all the efforts for the aid and relief of wounded soldiers, the President displayed untiring zeal. The kind of retaliation he wreaked upon the enemies of the Republic is demonstrated by one incident. Some trembling Confederate prisoners were brought to his notice, when he astonished them by taking each one by the hand. Then he said, “The solemn obligations which we owe to our country and posterity compel the prosecution of this war. Many of you, no doubt, occupy the attitude of enemies through uncontrollable circumstances. I bear no malice towards you, and can take you by the hand with sympathy and good feeling.” Some of the men were badly wounded, and he added, “Be of

good cheer, boys, and the end will be well. The best of care shall be taken of you.” The scene was very affecting, and many of the Confederate soldiers wept.

It must not be forgotten that Lincoln was not only the saviour of his country, but the liberator of a race. By the coloured people of the United States, therefore, his name was held in especial reverence. They journeyed from all parts of the country to do him honour, and he always received them with courtesy and kindness. This treatment was so different from that to which they had been accustomed, that their hearts were almost broken with joy. “He’s brought us through the Red Sea,” “He’s king of the United States,” “He ought to be king of the world.” Such were some of the exclamations of the freed negroes, who wept and laughed by turns from excess of emotion. The loyal coloured people of Baltimore presented the President with a very costly Bible as a token of respect and gratitude, and he acknowledged the gift as follows: “It is the best gift which God has ever given to man. All the good from the Saviour of

the world is communicated to us through this Book. But for it we could not know right from wrong. All those truths desirable for men are contained in it. I return you my sincere thanks for the very elegant copy of the Great Book of God which you present." A coloured woman of Philadelphia, in making a presentation to Lincoln, said, in a tremulous voice, "Mr. President, I believe God has hewn you out of a rock for this great and mighty purpose. Many have been led away by bribes of gold, of silver, of presents; but you have stood firm, because God was with you; and if you are faithful to the end, He will be with you." Lincoln, with his eyes full of tears, replied, "You must not give me the praise; it belongs to God." Speaker Colfax well said of President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation:—"The great act of the mighty chieftain, on which his fame shall rest long after his frame shall moulder away, is that of giving freedom to a race. We have all been taught to revere the sacred characters. Among them Moses stands pre-eminently high. He received the law from God,

and his name is honoured among the hosts of Heaven. Was not his greatest act the delivering three millions of his kindred out of bondage? Yet we may assert that Abraham Lincoln, by his proclamation, liberated more enslaved people than ever Moses set free, and those not of his kindred or his race. Such a power, or such an opportunity, God has seldom given to man. When other events shall have been forgotten; when literature shall enlighten all minds; when the claims of humanity shall be recognised everywhere, this act shall be conspicuous in the pages of history. We are thankful that God gave to Abraham Lincoln wisdom and grace to issue that Proclamation, which stands high above all other papers which have been penned by uninspired men."

The rest of the story of the Civil War is soon told. In 1864 military operations were first conducted upon an effective system, General Grant being granted a free hand as Commander-in-Chief. Trouble again arose with England. A number of Southerners resident in Canada abused the hospitality of that

country by the organisation of a raid across the border, and committed murder and robbery in the State of Vermont. They were arrested, and brought up on extradition proceedings, upon a demand for their surrender to the Government of the United States; but the judge discharged them from custody on a technicality. Great irritation ensued in the United States, and the Government revoked the Reciprocity Treaty, by which Canadian fishermen had enjoyed certain advantages in the American trade. Irregular Confederate negotiations were opened for settling terms of peace, and Lincoln authorised Horace Greeley to hear the propositions of any persons having authority from the Confederate Government; but the scheme failed, as the President tenaciously adhered to the restoration of the Union and the abolition of slavery.

The Presidential election occurred in November, 1864. The National Convention assembled in Baltimore, and Lincoln was again the candidate of his party. The votes of every State except Missouri were cast for Lincoln.

Missouri gave her 22 votes to General Grant; but immediately upon the announcement of the ballot, they were transferred to Lincoln. General McClellan was the Democratic candidate. Lincoln was re-elected by the largest majority ever known in Presidential elections. His popular majority was 411,428, in a total vote of 4,015,902. As none but the loyal States voted, the Electoral College vote was only 233, and of this number Lincoln had 212, and McClellan only 21. The re-election of Lincoln was practically the death-blow of the Rebellion. The Republicans urged a vigorous prosecution of the war, and demanded the abolition of slavery; but the Democrats proposed a cessation of hostilities, and the settlement of all difficulties in a National Convention. The election of Lincoln expressed the deliberate intention of the North to fight it out. Early in 1865 another abortive attempt to compose the quarrel was made at Hampton Roads, when the President conferred with authorised Southern Commissioners.

Lincoln's second inauguration

as President of the United States took place on the 4th March, 1865. To a gigantic assembly, the President delivered an address which has been described as the most remarkable State paper extant, and it proved to be his farewell deliverance to the American nation. This brief but moving address thus concluded: "The Almighty has His own purposes. 'Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.' If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offences which, in the Providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those Divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until

all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.' With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are engaged in; to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations."

About three weeks after the inauguration, Richmond, the Southern capital, fell, General Grant taking 12,000 prisoners and 50 pieces of artillery. Lincoln entered Richmond, not as the triumphant conqueror, but as the fellow-citizen of those who had fallen. On the 9th of April General Lee surrendered at Appomattox Council House, and the war was virtually at an end.

A banner was soon waving over the western portico of the Capitol at Washington, with the inscription underneath, "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes," and over the door of the State Department was written, "The Union, saved by faith in the Constitution, faith in the people, and trust in God." Never was peace more joyfully or more enthusiastically welcomed.

The great desire of President Lincoln's life was now accomplished, and he was about to address himself to the difficult problem of restoring the rebel States into their proper position in the Union, when he was struck down by the hand of the assassin. The 14th of April, 1865, having been fixed upon as a holiday for the loyal people, demonstrations were held during the day, and at night a special programme was arranged at Ford's Theatre, Washington. Lincoln attended, and received a remarkable ovation. During the performance, John Wilkes Booth, an actor, entered the President's box, and shot Lincoln in the head. He then leaped from the box on to the stage, and exclaimed, "*Sic semper*

tyrannis!" Brandishing a gleaming dagger he added, "The South is avenged!" and escaped in the confusion. Booth fled on horseback to a farm near Fredericksburg, where, refusing to surrender, he was shot some days afterwards. The President's assassination was part of a plot to kill the members of the Cabinet. Lincoln died the next day, and the country lamented him as one of the noblest of men, and the father of his people. Old and young wept together for this righteous and beneficent ruler. Queen Victoria and the Empress of the French wrote letters of condolence to the widow, and every Government in Europe added its sorrowful meed to the universal grief. The murdered President was buried at Springfield, and amongst the mottoes displayed in the town where he was especially beloved, and in which was his cherished home, was one bearing his own prophetic words, "Sooner than surrender this principle, I would be assassinated on the spot." Another motto ran, "Washington, the Father of his country; Lincoln, its Saviour."

Examples of Lincoln's magna-

nimity and humour are given by all his biographers. When Stonewall Jackson, who fought so bravely against the North, was praised by the *Washington Chronicle* as a brave soldier, but mistaken man, the President wrote to the editor:—"I honour you for your generosity to one who, though contending against us in a guilty cause, was nevertheless a gallant man. Let us forget his sins over his fresh-made grave." The same large-mindedness extended to all his enemies, who were surprised at his generosity where they expected revengefulness and vindictiveness. His humour was his "life preserver," and he frequently indulged in it to prevent himself breaking down from emotion. He laughed heartily over the *Nasby Papers*, and once thought of offering to change places with the author, if the latter would impart to him his singular talent. When Lincoln was at the White House he was besieged by office-seekers, as every President invariably is. When thrown down by measles, he exclaimed, "Now let the office-seekers come on; I have at

last got something I can give to all of them." Upon examining a gun so constructed as to prevent the escape of gas, he remarked, "I really believe this does what it is represented to do. But do any of you know of any machine or invention for preventing the escape of gas from newspaper establishments?" When the members of a delegation kept reiterating to him that there were "breakers ahead," he said they reminded him of the schoolboy who could not get hold of the names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. To the boy's sorrow, although the teacher had drilled him repeatedly, the names came on once more, and he was helpless before them. So he simply looked up and said, "Teacher, there's them three fellers again." When assured by a clergyman during the Civil War that the Lord was on his side, the President replied, "I know that the Lord is always on the side of the *right*. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that *I and this nation* should be on the Lord's *side*."

Abraham Lincoln was essentially a man of the people, and

lived for the people. Next in fame amongst his countrymen to Washington, history will endorse the popular tribute to the great Liberator. It says much for the Anglo-Saxon race that it can produce such men. In the record of nations there is probably not his equal for the work he accomplished. No man ever conducted a great nation through an arduous and terrible struggle with more courage, patience, dignity, and success, or with so little offence to the liberties of the people or the common rights of humanity. Yet he was humble, frank, and gentle in his dealings with men ; given to humour, even under the pressure of the heaviest burdens ; always upright, and animated by a simple faith in his Maker. His Proclamation of Emancipation takes equal rank with the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States ; and from one point of view it is even greater, for it was the work of one mind. Estimable as a man, Lincoln was also great as a statesman, and he was pre-eminently one of those characters who are a nation's pride and glory.

THE END.

COLOURS—EXQUISITE.

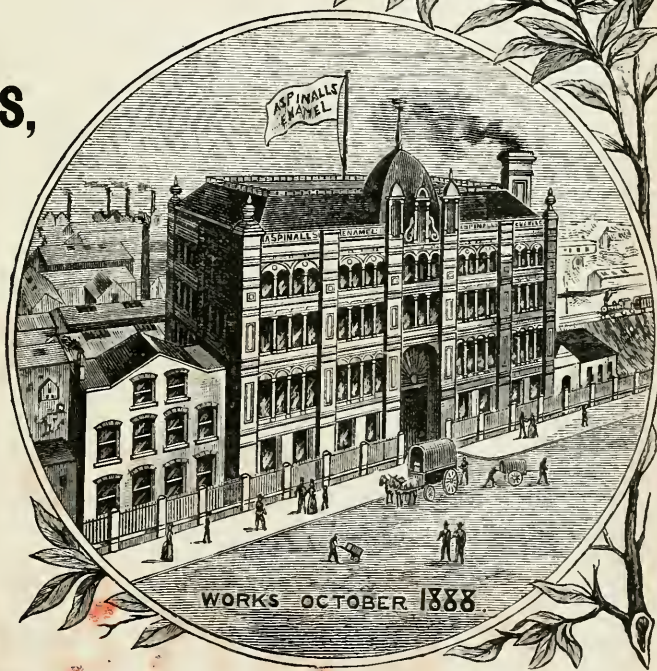
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